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Letter dated 28 November 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the thirty-eighth monthly report of the Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) (see annex). The report covers the period from 23 October to 22 November 2016.

With regard to the destruction of the chemical weapons production facilities declared by the Syrian Arab Republic, no progress has been made. In his note addressed to the OPCW Executive Council, the Director General again indicates that the poor security situation on the ground continues to prevent both the Syrian Government and the OPCW secretariat from safely accessing the remaining hangar and the two stationary above-ground facilities.

With regard to the initial declaration by the Syrian Arab Republic and its subsequent submissions, I reiterate the need for the Syrian Government and the OPCW secretariat to work together to fill all gaps and resolve all inconsistencies and discrepancies. Only then will the international community be satisfied that the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic no longer exists. In this regard, I note that, on 11 November 2016, the OPCW Executive Council decided to include the issue of the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme on the agenda of all its sessions until it has been determined that all elements of that programme have been dismantled.

I welcome the extension of the mandate of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism as a vital step towards ensuring that those involved in the use of chemical weapons are held accountable. Security Council resolution 2319 (2016) provides new details to guide the work of the Mechanism going forward, and we must now focus on the task ahead. I reiterate the importance of continued unity on this issue within the Security Council. The taboo against chemical weapons must be upheld.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

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Annex

Letter dated 24 November 2016 from the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled "Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme" prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of the OPCW Executive Council Decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 and United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Security Council. My report covers the period from 23 October to 22 November 2016 and also covers the reporting requirements of the Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(*Signed*) Ahmet **Üzümcü**

Enclosure

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

Note by the Director-General

Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2(f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") is to report to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also to be submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.

2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities" (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation "in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2(f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1".

3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria" (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015) noting the Director-General's intent to include reports of the OPCW Fact Finding Mission (FFM) in Syria, along with information on the Council's discussion thereof, as part of the monthly reporting pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Similarly, the Council, at its Eighty-First Session, adopted a decision entitled "Report by the Director-General Regarding the Declaration and Related Submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-81/DEC.4, dated 23 March 2016), noting the Director General's intent to provide information on the implementation of that decision.

4. The Council, at its Eighty-Third Session, adopted a decision entitled "OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism Reports on Chemical Weapons Use in the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-83/DEC.5, dated 11 November 2016). In subparagraph 12(a) of that decision, the Council decided that the Director-General shall "regularly inform the Council on the implementation of this decision and incorporate information regarding the implementation of this decision into his monthly reporting to the United Nations Security Council, through the United Nations Secretary-General, regarding EC-M-33/DEC.1".

5. This, the thirty-eighth monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions, and includes information relevant to the period from 23 October to 22 November 2016.

Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of Executive Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1

6. Progress by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:

(a) The Secretariat has verified the destruction of 24 of the 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. However, the poor security situation continues to preclude safe access both for the Syrian Arab Republic to destroy the remaining aircraft hangar, which stands ready to accept the explosive charges, and for the Secretariat to confirm the condition of the two stationary above ground facilities. As part of the agreed yearly verification activities, a team of the Secretariat left the OPCW Headquarters on 13 November 2016 to visit the five destroyed underground structures in order to verify the integrity of the interior plugs.

(b) On 16 November 2016, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its thirty-sixth monthly report (EC-84/P/NAT.2, dated 16 November 2016) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC M 34/DEC.1.

Progress in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons by States Parties hosting destruction activities

7. As reported previously, all of the chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic that were removed from its territory in 2014 have now been destroyed.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decision EC-81/DEC.4

8. As reported previously, through a letter dated 13 October 2016, the Syrian Arab Republic declared certain parts of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) under Article III of the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter "the Convention").

9. On 1 November 2016, the Secretariat replied to the aforementioned letter, informing the Syrian Government that the Secretariat considered the submitted declaration regarding the SSRC as incomplete, and urging the Syrian Arab Republic to declare all relevant parts of the SSRC under Articles III and VI of the Convention.

10. During a briefing to States Parties on 15 November 2016, the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) provided an overview of the outstanding issues with regard to the Syrian Arab Republic's declaration, which could be clustered into three categories:

(a) The role of the SSRC in the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme;

(b) The results of the analyses of samples collected at multiple locations in the Syrian Arab Republic; and

(c) Other chemical weapons-related activities that were undertaken prior to the Syrian Arab Republic's accession to the Convention.

Other activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic

11. An agreement to extend until the end of May 2017 the support provided by the United Nations Office for Project Services to the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic has been concluded.

12. As requested by the Council at its Seventy-Fifth Session (paragraph 7.12 of EC-75/2, dated 7 March 2014), the Secretariat, on behalf of the Director-General, has continued to brief States Parties in The Hague on its activities.

13. As at the cut-off date of this report, four OPCW staff members were deployed as part of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic, three of whom had been involved in the verification activities related to the five underground structures.

Supplementary resources

14. As previously reported, a Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the FFM and other remaining activities, such as those of the DAT. As at the cut-off date of this report, contribution agreements totalling EUR 7.8 million had been concluded with Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Monaco, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States of America, and the European Union. Pledges from other donors have been made and are currently being processed.

Activities carried out with respect to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria

15. Guided by Council decisions EC-M-48/DEC.1 and EC-M-50/DEC.1 (dated 23 November 2015), as well as by United Nations Security Council resolution 2209 (2015), the FFM continued to study all available information relating to allegations of use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. As presented during the briefing to States Parties on 15 November 2016, 66 incidents of alleged use have been recorded and analysed since December 2015, 28 of which had been reported since 1 August 2016. Particular attention was given to widely reported incidents such as in Saraqib on 1 August 2016, Aleppo on 2 August 2016, Zubdiya on 10 August 2016, Al-Sukkari on 6 September 2016, and Kafr Zita on 1 October 2016.

16. As reported previously, in response to the letter of 15 August 2016 from the Syrian Arab Republic requesting the FFM to investigate an incident of alleged use of chemical weapons on 2 August 2016 in the area of Al-Awamid in Aleppo, a team was deployed to Damascus in September and October 2016. During the reporting period, the FFM continued with the translation and analysis of the interviews conducted and documentation provided during the missions, and also analysed the received samples.

17. Additionally, the FFM has begun to examine the information received in a letter of 16 November 2016 from H.E. Dr Faisal Mekdad, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic, requesting the Director-General to dispatch OPCW experts to investigate three incidents reported to have occurred on 31 October, and 3 and 13 November 2016 in the city of Aleppo. The Russian Federation has offered to provide samples and other material in relation to the alleged incident in Hamdaniyeh and Dahiyet al-Assad in the city of Aleppo. The OPCW proposed to

receive them in Damascus or in The Hague. The team will continue to work with the National Authority of the Syrian Arab Republic to gather more information.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decision EC-83/DEC.5

18. The Head of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, under cover of a letter to the Director-General dated 28 October 2016, provided the fourth report of the Joint Investigative Mechanism and requested that the Council be informed thereof. The report was submitted to the United Nations Security Council on 24 October 2016 pursuant to Security Council resolution 2235 (2015), and has since been made available to the Council in accordance with paragraph 11 of that resolution.

19. As reported in paragraph 4 above, the Council adopted decision EC-83/DEC.5 by voting on 11 November 2016, and the Secretariat has begun the initial preparatory work in view of its implementation.

Conclusion

20. The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will be on the implementation of Council decisions EC-83/DEC.5 and EC-81/DEC.4 and on the activities of the FFM, as well as on the destruction and verification of the remaining aircraft hangar, confirmation of the status of the two stationary above ground facilities, and annual inspections of the underground structures already verified as destroyed.